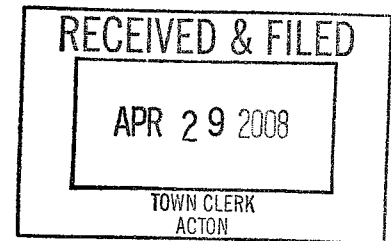


Application #0807

TOWN OF ACTON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
472 Main Street, Acton, MA 01720



APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE

Applicant Pamela Furnace

Telephone 978-263-5711

E-mail pfurnace@aol.com

Address 233 Old Beaverbrook Rd., Acton, MA 01718

Property owner and address Acton Community Center Inc., dba Theatre III
(if different from applicant) 250 Central St., Acton, MA 01720

Location of Work 250 Central St.
No. Street

District: Center West X
South

Pursuant to Ch. 40C of the General Laws of Massachusetts, application is hereby made for issuance of a Certificate for work within a Local Historic District.

Description of Proposed work:

(See instructions for additional information required)

Complete restoration of 16 or more windows at Theatre III, 250 Central St., West Acton. Work to be performed by an experienced restorer with many years experience in historic window repair and restoration. See proposal from Heartwood Building and Restoration attached. Windows will be inspected and labeled and removed from premises to a workshop. Windows will be stripped, deglazed, repaired and treated to preserve wood and improve wood condition. Original glass will be reused wherever possible and replacement glass equivalent to original will be used where necessary. Window sashes, sash cords and weights, hardware, parting beads and sills will be repaired to restore windows to full working order, preserve them for the future and preserve original appearance. Carved decorative features will be stripped and repainted, enhancing the visual appearance and restoring it to original intent. There will be no visual change to the exterior of the windows other than an improvement for neater painting, cleaner and unbroken glass. New paint will match current exterior, historic white in color and type.

Funding for this project will come from Theatre III reserves and a grant (already approved by Town Meeting) from the Community Preservation Act.

Work to begin upon completion of approval from Historic District Commission, CPC and Town of Acton. We hope to begin work no later than June 1, 2008 in order to have it completed before the beginning of the next show production work beginning in September 2008.

For further information, or if applicant needs to appear at a AHDC meeting, please contact applicant at 978-263-5711 or via email at pfurnace@aol.com

The undersigned hereby certifies that the information on this application and that any plans submitted herewith are correct, and constitute a complete description of the work proposed.

Signature of applicant Patricia Funnell

Date 4/22/08

Application received by on behalf of Theatre III for HDC.

Date 4/29/08

Certificate approved by [Signature]
for Historic District Commission

Date

Certificate of appropriateness not required (Certificate of Non-Applicability issued)



Pamela Furnace
On behalf of
Acton Community Center, Inc.
dba Theatre III
233 Old Beaverbrook Road
Acton, MA 01718

Town of Acton
Historic District Commission
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720

Mr. Bendig and Ladies and Gentlemen of the Commission:

Enclosed is an application for a certificate of approval (or non-applicability if such applies) for work to be done at 250 Central Street, Acton, the building now known as Theatre III. The work involves restoration and repair of windows to this historic building. A Community Preservation Act grant was recently approved for this project at Town Meeting.

In addition to your application form, I am including pertinent information from our application for the CPC grant. This includes a full description of the work, the proposal from the window restoration company, a land plot showing the building's location in the West Acton Historic District, and photos of the current conditions. There is no sketch of the outside of the building as the work is to encompass all windows in the building. This work is designed to restore the windows as close as possible to their original condition, with no change in design, color, construction or external appearance (other than to make them look better than they do now, of course).

In order to complete this work during the summer months when we do not have productions scheduled, we would like to start the project by June 1st.

I am available to answer any questions you may have about this project, or to appear at any meetings of the Commission as necessary. I can be reached during business hours at 617-565-5530, or evenings at 978-263-5711 or by email at pfurnace@aol.com.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Pamela Furnace
Grant Coordinator/Board of Directors
Theatre III

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Project Description

The proposed project will restore and repair 16 windows in the former Universalist Church, 250 Central Street, West Acton. This building is currently owned by the Acton Community Center Incorporated, known as Theatre III.

There are six 20-over-18 arched double hung windows, three on each side of the building, with two additional 20-over-18 windows on the front façade. There are three 12-over-12 windows at the bottom level on each side; these windows do not open. There are two additional simpler windows at side, ground level of the front entrance. All 16 windows are original to the building. Most of the window panes are original glass with original glazing.

A recent inspection of the windows by an experienced window restorer indicated that the windows can be restored to good working order, preserving the outer appearance and bringing back the workability of the windows. There is wood rot in some windows and sills. Many windows are missing parting beads and window stops. All the wood, which dates from 1868, is extremely dry and in need of significant reconditioning to preserve the wood and improve fit in the frame. Pulleys are missing from several windows and are minimally functional in others. The top sash of the upper side and front windows have been nailed shut; restoration of pulleys and hardware on these windows is needed to restore former function.

There is no doubt that the loose windows, broken panes and deteriorating glazing cause significant heat loss in the winter. We have requested an energy audit from Keyspan to obtain an estimate of projected savings from this work. If the upper sash can be restored, we will be able to provide much-improved ventilation in the auditorium, allowing increased use of the facility in the summer.

Several windows are so loose in their frames because of missing stops and parting beads that they could possibly be pushed out of the frame entirely. Restoration and repair would restore the basic safety of the windows.

Restoration of the original windows will preserve the exterior appearance of this historical building, including the ornamental designs. We will reuse original glass as much as possible. Replacement windows, which are also significantly more expensive, will not.

Overall Work Plan

Windows will be removed from the building and taken to the restorer's workshop. The restorer will install temporary closures for the window openings to protect the building's interior and contents. The restorer will provide all necessary scaffolding and materials. The restorer is insured and Theatre III maintains adequate liability insurance. Work is weather dependent for start and finish times; in addition, it must be done so as not to interrupt scheduled performances. Therefore, work will begin in mid to late May and will be completed by late October.

Background of 250 Central Street

The property at 250 Central Street, West Acton, was built in 1868 by the West Society of the Universalists in Acton. It was the second church built in West Acton, following the West Acton Baptist Church. With its location on Central Street the church was a major landmark in the West Acton village.

The Universalist Church shows the influence of the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles of rural church design in the 1850-1860 period. The basic design is in keeping with classical tradition, a rectangular block with pitched roof and frontal tower. The octagonal belfry is topped by a tall spire of Gothic design. The foundation is granite; wide corner boards articulate the corners of the main block. The windows flank the central tower and line the nave. The double pointed upper windows with quatrefoil ornament are Gothic details, with Italianate influences. An addition was added to the rear in later years to provide a kitchen.

The Reverend Edwin Davis headed both the Universalist Society in West Acton and the Society in South Acton; he was followed by the Reverend I.C. Knowlton. In 1876 a group of thirty members was formally organized into the West Acton Universalist Church. Many prominent members of the Acton community were associated with the church, including Arthur Blanchard, George Wright, Capt. Frank Whitcomb, Hanson Littlefield, Phineas Wetherbee and Susan Davis Wright, grandniece of Isaac Davis. The building served as an active church in the West Acton community and housed the West Acton Library from 1892-1894.

In December 1925, Arthur Blanchard, George Mead and George Wright purchased the building from the Universalist Church, deeding it free and clear to the West Acton Women's Club, which had been founded in 1896. The Women's Club added a large stage and dressing room to the addition at the rear of the building, which they used for dramatic presentations by the Littleton Players and other groups.

In October 1955 the building was sold to the Acton Community Center, Inc. for \$500. The Community Center supported a number of activities for the citizens of Acton including a nursery school, dog obedience training, afternoon children's movies, adult education classes and various community meetings. Three groups used the building on a regular basis for rehearsals and performances: Little Theatre Workshop, the Acton Chorus, and the Acton Dance Club. These three groups began to collaborate on productions and eventually formed Theatre III, which is now the sole occupant of the building.

Theatre III is now in its 52nd season of providing reasonably priced entertainment to Acton and the surrounding community. Theatre III produces at least three shows each year from September through May, along with other productions in collaboration with Open Door Theatre, fund raising events and workshops on theatre arts.

Benefit to the Town of Acton and Its Citizens

One of the stated goals of the West Acton Village Plan is to preserve historic buildings within West Acton Village. "West Acton Village is a relatively small clustered settlement dominated by older homes and structures generally situated on small, narrow lots. The extent and variety of land uses within West Acton Village are among the strongest

determinants of the village's character; therefore preservation of village character is largely dependent on them." The plan also recommends that we "promote the use of cultural resources within West Acton Village such as the Citizen's Library and Theatre III. Action." Another goal of the West Acton Village Plan is "to improve the appearance of the village," which includes as an objective "the maintenance and simple repair of the exterior of buildings and structures within the village." Restoration of the windows as outlined in this project will contribute to these goals of the Village Plan.

Theatre III is part of the historic inventory for the West Acton Historic District. The building has been a centerpiece of the West Acton community since 1868. A significant proportion of Acton residents have attended some meeting, class or theatrical production here. For example, Warren Costello, one of Theatre III's original members, attended kindergarten classes in this building, performed as a child in theatricals sponsored by the Women's Club, and performed in numerous Theatre III productions.

The building is an anchor in the community, a landmark in the village and a major link to Acton's past. If we are to preserve this past, we must take action now to preserve the structure through careful restoration and preservation. Theatre III is but the current steward of this history. With careful preservation and loving care, the building can live on for other groups and other purposes in future years.

Scope of Work

Restoration of these windows will include:

- Marking each window and sash for future work and archival purposes
- Removal of sash, parting beads, stops and pulleys to workshop
- Temporary boarding over window openings while sash are removed
- Cleaning and lubrication of pulleys and replacement of ropes
- Removal of hardware and replacement of non-functioning hardware
- Removal and cleaning of all glass and removal of old glazing
- Repairs to sash, jambs as needed
- Repairs to weight pocket covers
- Conditioning of all wood surfaces and application of preservative
- Priming and painting of all windows
- Replacement of parting beads and window stops
- Installation of weather stripping
- Reinstallation of restored sash

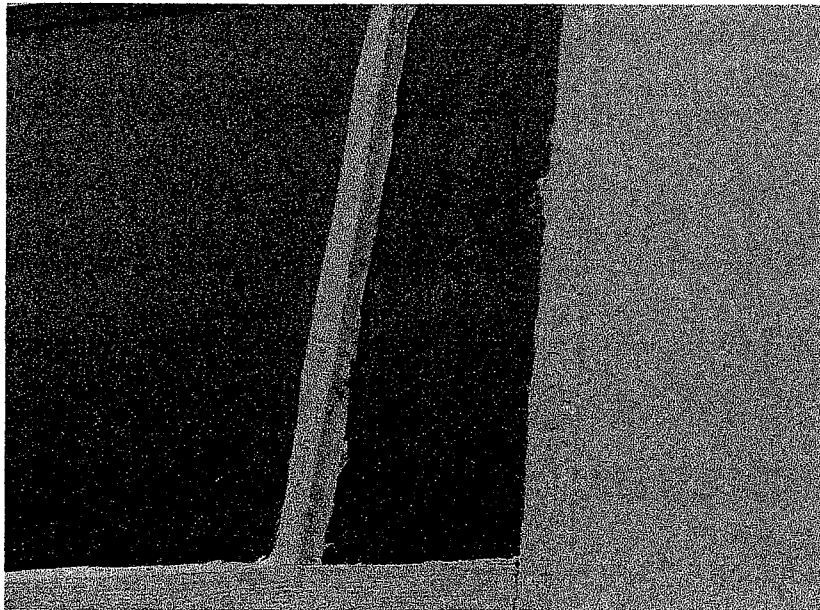
All work will be done by a contractor experienced in the restoration of historic windows. All work will be done in accordance with the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.



Close up of 20 over 18 double hung upper window.
Note detail at top of double arch, which will become more prominent with restoration and repainting.



Close up of exterior of bottom double hung window, detailing broken glass with ineffective repair and gaps around bottom of window due to shrinking and drying of wood and missing stops and parting beads.



Close up of bottom sash of upper story double hung window showing broken glass and condition of glazing.